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Results of a survey of graduate English departments (Association of Departments of English), responses of young junior college English instructors to a request to assess their preparation (National Junior College English Study), and tentative recommendations for junior college teacher preparation (National Junior College English Study) are presented. Instructor opinions receive particular attention, with excerpts on (1) lack of preparation to teach composition, (2) lack of practical instruction on how to teach, and (3) lack of preparation for the junior college student. Graduate English department survey data concern the number of special junior college teacher preparation programs, sharing of teacher preparation with education departments, supervised teaching and internship on a junior college campus, and teacher intern remuneration. Recommendations concern breadth of teacher training and relations between the graduate English departments and junior college English departments. For a related document see TE 500 591. (AF)

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THE PREPARATION OF JUNIOR COLLEGE ENGLISH INSTRUCTORS

by Patricia Gaj

The following is an Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) paper on the preparation of junior college English instructors. Three sources of information were used: 1. a survey made by ADE of graduate English departments; 2. the responses to a request made by the National Junior College English Study to junior college instructors who recently left graduate school; 3. the tentative recommendations of the National Junior College English Study.

I.

In October, 1968, attempting to gather current information about graduate programs in English in the United States and Canada, the Association of Departments of English (ADE) mailed questionnaires to the chairmen of 413 departments which were thought to offer graduate work in English and American literature.[1] Two hundred and sixty-three replies were received of which 58 indicated that their departments "offer or participate in the offering of special degree programs or courses designed for the preparation of junior and community college teachers." A follow-up questionnaire was sent to these 58 schools, resulting in 53 responses. When asked specifically if theyhave a "consciously designed" program to prepare junior college English instructors, 19 said "no" (2 indicated that they hope to in the near future) and one failed to answer the question. Seven are just beginning or presently working on plans and only 25 now say they do have such a program. Even among these relatively few schools, however, the programs vary widely in requirements and methods. Degrees offered range from a straight M.A. in English, an M.A. with education courses within it, and the

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[1]For the results of this survey, see Bonnie Nelson's article "Graduate Programs in English and American Literature," ADE Bulletin, May 1969.

M.A. plus education courses, to a Ph.D. with emphasis on teaching in the junior college. One school allows a minor in counseling.

Direction of the programs is shared by the English and education departments in 15 cases, belongs to English in 9 cases, and to education in one case. The English subject matter component of the student's training is taken entirely in the English department and taught by members of the English staff in 21 instances and is taken in both the English and education departments in 4. The pedagogical component is taken in the education department in 10 cases, in the English department in 8, and shared in 5. Only one institution uses both English faculty and community college faculty.

Within the highly selective sample of 26 (out of a universe of 413) with a consciously designed program for preparing junior college English instructors, only 8 provide supervised teaching on the junior college campus and only 2 of these have internships. Twelve consider the TA experience on their own campuses as training for teaching in the junior college, even though a large majority of junior college teachers in the field now feel that the experience is inadequate as preparation for the junior college assignment. Five programs provide no teaching experience at all.

Supervision of student teaching is carried out by members of the English department in 13 cases, by members of the education department in 4 instances, and by both in 7.

Not surprisingly, of the 11 programs which recompense their candidates for teaching, 9 are TA's within the departments offering the degree. In only two institutions are students paid while interning on the junior college campus. In these two programs the candidate becomes a staff member attending

department meetings, serving on committees and encountering the special goals and problems of the junior college. Most programs have merely readjusted slightly their usual methods of preparing four-year college teachers or even high school teachers. In general, this survey showed that interest in the preparation of junior college English instructors is growing but the total effort of the graduate departments is inadequate both in numbers trained and in the grasp of the nature and quality of training needed to prepare candidates to teach in junior college programs.

II.

Opinions expressed by young junior college instructors recently out of graduate school clearly show that they feel their preparation was inadequate. Frequently they expressed dissatisfaction with their preparation to teach composition in the junior college:

> I do feel, as a beginning English instructor, that my training should have included some graduate courses in the teaching of composition. Composition is the area in which most junior college English instructors spend a major part of their time, and yet the last composition course I had was when I was a freshman. After a year of graduate study of literature, there is a startling jump to the teaching of freshman composition.

Another, more detailed, response was given by an instructor in the Midwest:

> The English program in a two-year college is, by nature of the institution, heavy on composition courses, both remedial and college parallel. For example, in a school servicing students during the fall quarter, our department offered seventeen sections of remedial composition (25 students each), twenty-seven sections of college composition (25 students each), and four sections of literature survey (35 students each). The young instructor may have had a teaching assistantship in composition, but during graduate school these classes were secondary to his own work--in literature. There is little relationship between graduate work in literature and the teaching of composition, and absolutely <u>none</u> between such advanced work and remedial composition. The only thing the instructor has going for him (hopefully) is an ability to adapt his own writing experience to the classroom.

Some were unhappy over the fact that so little attention had been paid to problems of teaching English:

> Most new teachers, though erudite in their fields, do not have the slightest idea how to teach; too often, there is a wide gap between the instructor's knowledge and his ability to communicate it, let alone adapt it to varying situations. Also, many new teachers, myself included, have difficulty determining what should be communicated. What goals should be followed? What standards should be applied? How does one measure student progress? . . . Especially needed is at least one course dealing, specifically, with how to teach composition and how to establish reasonable, worthwhile standards and goals, as well as a means by which to measure them.

They feel that there is little recognition of the fact that the students on the junior college differ from those in the four-year college:

> . . . needed is the preparation of teachers for a student usually unlike the instructor and unlike most students with whom the instructor attended college. . . In essence, junior college teachers need to be taught how to work with those students which they have, rather than trying to teach as if they had different students.

One new instructor gave this reason for the inapplicability of the TA experience to the junior college:

> Since most of my students come to me with a very weak background (because of having attended poor school systems, because of having had a complete lack of motivation throughout their academic lives, or because of, in many cases, having a definite lack of ability, for a variety of reasons), I cannot assume the same common denominators, assumed in many four-year schools . . .

Instead of on-campus teaching in the senior college, contact with and knowledge about the junior college student would have been welcomed by new instructors. They wish they had left for a while the "ivory tower" of the graduate English department and faced the practical problems in teaching the junior college student:

> . . . the preparing junior college English instructor should learn empirically through continuous experience with students how the a-verbal child and adolescent learns . . .

III.

The responses from new instructors clearly support some of the recommendations for the preparation of junior college English instructors made by the National Junior College English Study. These recommendations register two basic concerns:

1. In the face of the broad variety of student interests and abilities in the junior college, the graduate English department should take the lead in developing programs that give prospective junior college English instructors the breadth of training and attitude they will need. This would involve offering work that would increase their understanding of the nature and variety of the reading experience, of the acquisition of language, and its development, and of the process of writing. The future teacher should know how reading is learned and the problems involved in applying reading skills to literary study. He should be aware of how the child acquires language, how language changes, and what is the nature of social dialects. He should also be given practice in writing beyond the ordinary freshman course and beyond the critical papers normally required in literature courses, i.e. his experience should not be limited to expository writing. He should perceive the writing process as an instrument of ordering and clarifying thought, and of the writer's knowing himself and his world. This perception involves a turning back on himself to analyze what happens in creating a well-formed idea. (All writing is the result of individual thinking and therefore creative.) He would then be able to guide his students in the psychological, not just the logical, analysis of the writing

process. He could help them realize that the groping and fumbling of a first draft is not unusual and is not an indication that they are incapable of good work. Breadth of training and acquaintance with several disciplines would also make the junior college English teacher more aware of the changing and unfolding nature of modern society, and through this awareness, foster a sympathy for cultures different from his own and a sensitivity to the predicament of individuals faced with revolutionary changes.

2. In order to make the graduate program more specifically oriented to the junior college, the graduate English department should involve experienced junior college English instructors in planning and conducting the programs described above, should initiate exchange programs with junior college English departments within its geographic area to provide first-hand knowledge of the junior college, and should arrange for internships for its teacher candidates on the junior college campuses.